



Attendance Policy 2021/2022

Introduction:

One of the key things that we can do for our pupils is to make sure they attend school regularly and on time.

Good attendance and punctuality habits will help your child's social development.

Making and maintaining friendships is easier if children are here, on time and every day.

Oasis Academy Watermead is committed to developing the character and competence of all its pupils in the context of the communities in which they live.

We believe that these are the essential components for an excellent education; and that in order for pupils to develop their character and competence, they must attend school regularly.

We recognise that attendance is a safeguarding matter and that poor attendance may indicate that a pupil's welfare may be at risk.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the OCL National policy, OCL Attendance', see link below:

https://oasiscommunitylearning.finalsite.com/uploaded/National_Policies/Attendance_Policy.pdf

Sheffield City Council have also produced a short leaflet outlining the importance of ensuring good school attendance habits, see link below:

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/content/dam/sheffield/docs/schools-and-childcare/attendance/School%20Attendance%20Leaflet.pdf>

Key Principles

- Children at Oasis Academy Watermead have the right to the best possible education
- Children cannot learn in school if they do not attend, staff encourage and support children to achieve their potential
- Attendance is everyone's business
- Teachers should be actively involved in reviewing attendance and should monitor and discuss with parents
- There is always a reason for poor attendance; staff must listen to children and families and work with them to identify the barrier and the support them to overcome it.

Aims of this policy

Through a consistent, robust and positive approach to attendance Oasis Academy Watermead aim to:

- Ensure that pupils attend school at least to the national average of 96%.
- Ensure that effective attendance practice is understood and implemented by all staff and is closely linked to safeguarding practice
- Promote punctuality in attendance
- Support parents and carers in their legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Maintain an attendance percentage overall of greater than 96%.

- Maintain parents and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.
- To set out how OAW monitors attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that the OAW policy also applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits from an early age

Key Benchmarks

- Attendance percentage
- Overall absence percentage
- Persistent absence (PA) percentage (90% or below)
- Minutes late

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attendees make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attendees find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attendees find learning more satisfying
- Regular attendees have an easier transfer to secondary school

Roles and Responsibilities

The Regional Director:

The Regional Director is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a regular basis. The Regional Director also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

Principal:

The Principal has overall responsibility for attendance within the school and directs school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the Academy, and for monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it as required, including responsibility for monitoring the progress of children Looked After by the Local Authority.

Academy Council:

- Maintain an overview of attendance through reports provided by the Principal and the Local Authority.
- Attend School Attendance Panels as necessary.

Attendance Lead:

- Monitors attendance data via Bromcom, the SOL tracker and KPI reports, produced by the attendance officer.
- Discusses attendance progress with the attendance officer on a weekly basis
- Ensures that all staff follow the attendance policy.

The Attendance Officer

Oasis Academy Watermead monitors pupil's attendance closely. To assist with this attendance percentages are banded and colour coded.

Green Group 97% - 99.9% Attendance	Lowest Risk. Best chance of academic success. With 98% A pupil has still missed 4 days of education across an academic year.
Yellow Group 96% - 96.9% Attendance	Concern. Chance of academic achievement is reduced. 96% means that a pupil has missed 7 days of education and has fallen below the National Average
Amber Group 94.0% - 95.9% Attendance	Serious risk of underachievement. 95% means a pupil misses 10 days of education across an academic year.
Pink Group 90% - 93.9% Attendance	Severe risk of underachievement. 90% means a pupil is missing 19 days of education across the academic year.
Red Group 0-89.9% Attendance	Extreme risk of underachievement. Persistently absent (at risk of Penalty Notice or prosecution) Below 90% means a pupil is missing more than 3 weeks of education across the year.

They will

- Work with other schools and agencies to promote attendance and punctuality within the locality.
- Maintain an overview of attendance and manages the day-to-day implementation of attendance plans and strategies.
- Use BROMCOM and SOL to produce and evaluate attendance statistics.
- Identify and support families, whose children have low attendance & punctuality.
- Initiate first day of absence calls via telephone, if parents have failed to inform us of an absence.
- Initiate home visits, where appropriate.
- Maintain and update registers on a daily basis.
- Meet with the Pastoral Team to discuss attendance/punctuality matters
- Meet with the Principal to discuss individual pupils whose attendance is of concern, e.g. by below 96%, and agree action as necessary.
- Will refer to the Pastoral Manager for additional support/guidance.
- Report any pupil missing from education for 10 days, without notification of whereabouts, to the LA as a Child Missing from Education.
- Will intervene and communicate more if a child's attendance becomes a concern.

A child will be identified as persistently absent if they are absent the following amounts:

Terms	Sessions Absent (AM/PM)	Number of Days
1	7 or more	3.5
1-2	14 or more	7
1-3	20 or more	10
1-4	25 or more	12.5
1-5	31 or more	15.5
1-6	38 or more	19

Class teachers

- Accurately mark registers on BROMCOM, using appropriate codes as well as maintaining a paper register to ensure safety in the event of a fire.
- Update the fire registers when a child leaves/arrives mid-session.
- Add any comments to the register for the attention of the Attendance Officer.
- Report to appropriate staff any issues which may affect the attendance or punctuality of a pupil
- Promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and the school
- Discusses attendance with parents and agrees targets
- Receive, update and maintain accurate class registers
- Maintain an attendance database on BROMCOM

Positive Reinforcement

In order to promote high levels of attendance and to recognise individual and collective high percentage attendance or improvement Oasis Academy Watermead uses a range of incentives and rewards:

- Attendance assemblies celebrate individual pupil's attendance, class attendance and whole school attendance.
- The Attendance Mascots – Mrs Penguin and Baby Penguin are awarded weekly to the top attending class in KS1 and a cup of sweets for KS2.
- Attendance has a high profile – weekly attendance assembly and classroom displays.
- Pupils are presented with certificates, trophies or medals; they receive an invite to the AttendANCE as well as being given a selection box, an Easter egg and an end of year celebration pizza party.
- Our parents are also important to us and can win one of several vouchers ranging from £5 to £50 in our attendance prize draw.
- A choice of gift is available to parents whose children end the year with 100% attendance.

Reporting Absences

All schools have a legal responsibility to diligently and accurately complete registration. This includes correctly recording absences.

Morning registration takes places at 8.50am. Children who are not present in their classroom, when the register is called will be marked absent.

Parents must phone Oasis Academy Watermead on **0114 201 6800** by 9:00am on day one of absence and every subsequent day to report their child's absent, unless expressly agreed by OAW. Failure to do this will result in the absence being unauthorised.

Once a child has fallen below 96%, whether as one or numerous periods of absence, all subsequent days will be unauthorised, unless medical evidence is provided.

Providing an emergency contact number for more than one person. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. Doing so provides schools with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Attendance Register

Each day we will record whether your child is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We have a responsibility and a duty of care to follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use in the register

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence:

Only the school may authorise absence

If a parent/carer provides an explanation of absence, we will review that information very carefully, and decide whether to authorise the absence, based on guidance from the DfE.

The school will clearly set out obligations for parents/carers regarding attendance and punctuality.

Absence may be authorised if:

- The pupil is too ill to attend school.
- The pupil is unable to attend due to unavoidable circumstances.
- The pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs.
- The pupil is the child of traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return and the name of the second registration school is confirmed.
- There is an immediate family bereavement.
- The pupil has a local authority license to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence.
- The pupil was present at registration, leaves for a medical appointment and returns during that session (*a note is made against the / mark to outline the time that the pupil left/returned. All paper fire registers will be updated accordingly*).
- The school has agreed to an absence from school under exceptional circumstances.

Absence should not be authorised if:

- The parent/carer offers no explanation.
- The pupil is staying at home to look after parents, siblings or the home.
- The pupil is absent on special occasions e.g. birthday.
- The pupil is absent unnecessarily e.g. taken shopping, for a haircut.
- Absence **may** be unauthorised without medical evidence if a pupil's attendance is below 96%

Appointments during the School Day

In order to maximise individual achievement parents should avoid making routine appointments for their children during the school day.

If a child does have an appointment during the school day parents must inform the school office as soon as possible. Proof (appointment card, letter, text reminder etc.) should be provided when possible.

Wherever possible children should come to school beforehand and return to school after an appointment. Taking a whole day off school for an appointment is, in most circumstances, unnecessary. Any unnecessary absences due to appointments will be marked unauthorised.

Term Time Leave of Absence:

Schools are no longer able to authorise term time holidays. Families may request term time leave from school in exceptional circumstances, i.e. close family bereavement, parents getting married (to each other or a new partner) and the serious illness of an immediate family member.

This list is not exhaustive and the Principal will determine any requests for leave under exceptional circumstances on an individual basis.

The following points may also be considered before a decision is made.

- When an exceptional request is made for absence during the first two weeks in September.
- During school examinations, assessment weeks or monitoring periods.
- When a pupil's attendance is below 96%.
- When a leave of absence has already been agreed and taken by the pupil during the academic year
- The parent/carer of any pupil with absence recorded as holiday, whether authorised or unauthorised, must meet with the attendance officer once the child has returned to school.

If an unauthorised leave is taken during term time and a consecutive absence of 10 or more sessions is logged a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued will be sent to Sheffield City Council. Schools may consider removing a pupil from roll when information is available to evidence persistent absence due to unauthorised term time leave.

We will work closely with the local authority to maintain consistency of approach, to ensure that there can be no allegations of bias or favouritism.

If the policy is not being applied consistently, the Local Authority will not be able to apply for a Penalty Notice.

Punctuality/Late Arrival

It is OAW's responsibility to provide the best education possible. This can only be achieved if children attend regularly and on time. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. A child arriving late disrupts learning. Consistent lateness will result in further follow up investigation and action. This will include Penalty Notices. Any families experiencing difficulty bringing their children to school on time should speak to the attendance officer or the pastoral manager.

- Morning registration is at 8.50am and the classroom doors will open at 8.40am
- Children in FS2 and Reception classes will enter and exit via their classroom



- Older children will access their classes via the grey doors directly opposite the entrance gates
- Doors will close promptly at 8.50am

After this time you will then need to make your way to the dining room entrance.

- Your child will be welcomed into school by a member of staff, whilst you discuss the reasons for being late with the Attendance Officer.
- Your child will receive a late mark and we will record the number of minutes late on the register.

It is important to be on time, as every second of learning counts - and learning begins from the minute that your child enters school.

If your child arrives late, they will be missing a vital part of the curriculum and their learning for the whole day may be affected.

Arriving late on a regular basis may also affect your child's personal and social development.

Arriving after the close of register (9.30am); will be marked as an unauthorised absence in line with the DfE guidance. This will affect their overall attendance percentage.

Attendance and punctuality is everyone's responsibility and we will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.

Late Collection

All children must be collected on time. School finishes at the following times:

- Nursery - 11:30am (morning session) or 3:15pm (afternoon session)
- Reception to Year 6 - 3:15pm

If your child is not collected on time following steps will be taken:

- 15 minutes late - Parents will be phoned
- 30 minutes late - Other listed contacts will be phoned
- Home visits
- If we have not been able to make contact with a parent, social care or the police may be contacted.

If someone other than the usual person/people will be collecting your child parents must inform the school as early as possible. Children will not be able to leave school if a staff member has not heard directly from the parent.

Children Missing Education

If you intend to transfer your child/children to another setting, you must complete transfer forms that are available from the school office.

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information, and we are unable to contact you, then your child is considered a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child. By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on best practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority.

Home Educated Children

Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full time education but this does not have to be at a school.

On receipt of written notification to home educate, we will inform the local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register.

Further information is available from the DfE and Sheffield Local Authority – see link below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818204/School_attendance_July_2019.pdf

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/school-attendance-truancy>

Parental Legal Duties & Responsibilities

All parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child(ren) of compulsory school age (5 to 16) attends school regularly and punctually. In addition, the government requires all schools to monitor attendance and appropriately address any attendance concerns.

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. By law, pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Oasis Academy Watermead fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Oasis Academy Watermead is striving to achieve 97% attendance.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with and develop large gaps in their learning, this has a direct impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning. Children with attendance of 90% or lower are considered 'persistently absent' and are at extreme risk of underachievement.

Oasis Academy Watermead will implement strategies and provide additional support to parents of children who are at severe or extreme risk of under achievement. Strategies & additional support may include:

- A meeting with the designated attendance panel
- Weekly or fortnightly attendance reviews with the attendance officer
- A meeting with the Academy Principal
- If appropriate, a referral to the School Nursing team or contact with your doctor
- The attendance officer along with another designated member of staff may on occasion collect a child and bring them to school
- Where there is medical/behavioural evidence for absence, a part time timetable may be considered

If parents/carers fail to engage with the school to improve attendance or attendance does not improve despite strategies and additional support being put in place OAW can refer to Sheffield City Council who, in accordance with the Education Act 1996, may issue a Penalty Notice or in some circumstances seek to prosecute.



Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice can be issued if a child accrues 6 days (12 sessions or 10%) of unauthorised absence in a six week period. This does include persistent lateness. A penalty Notice is a £120 fine. If this is paid within 21 days of receipt, the fine will be reduced to £60. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of receipt court action may be taken by Sheffield City Council.

Prosecution

Where a child's attendance is below 90% and the criteria for Penalty Notice has been exceeded, Sheffield City Council may seek to prosecute. If prosecuted Magistrates can issue fines of up to £450 per child.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Policy reviewed by:

Elaine Bonsall – Attendance Officer
Claire Homer – SOL Consultant
Gayle Brailsford – Senior Safeguarding Leader
Adam Dawson - Principal
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